

Durango Itinerary - August 7, 2015:

9:10 Shaun McGrath and David Ostrander Arrive Durango
9:30 Meeting with EPA OSC's Hays Griswold (tentatively Pete Stevenson) (location TBD)
10:15/10:30 Local officials meeting at County Commissioner's office

Attendance should include Mayor, County Commissioners, Congressional Staff, and a few EOC staff to provide an overview of what they've seen along the river and what they're hearing locally

11:00 Tour of the Water Treatment Plant
12:00 Visit the river and lunch.
1:30 to 2:30 Public meeting/press
4:00 Shaun McGrath Return flight

Talking Points:

On August 5, 2015, an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and State Division of Reclamation Mining and Safety team working to investigate and address contamination at the Gold King Mine in San Juan County, Colorado, unexpectedly triggered a large release of mine waste water into the upper portions of Cement Creek. Initial estimates are that the release contained approximately one million gallons of water that was held behind unconsolidated debris near an abandoned mine portal. There were several workers at the site at the time of the breach, all were unharmed.

Flow from the mine is now controlled but is still discharging into Cement Creek. The plan is to build settling ponds today to contain it – the upper pond will be completed by early afternoon, and the lower one by COB or early tomorrow. There is plenty of caustic soda and flocculent on-site to provide treatment once the pond is built. Hays is going to “ground-truth” whether the 1200 gpm discharge is the correct flow number or not. He is driving past Silverton now on his way to Durango and says the Animas River is clearing up. It is cloudy but no longer red, so that is good news.

ASPECT arrived in Santa Fe, New Mexico, last evening to fuel up, and completed a preliminary overflights to determine how far downstream the release has gotten. The flight crew is preparing to take off this morning to fly the river from the border to the mine and take photographs.

Updated Timeline of Events:

8/5/15
Blowout Occurs (10:30am)
Safety of On Site Personnel is Secured
CDPHE notified (12:40 pm)
Notifications to Durango, San Juan Basin Health Dept., and water intakes complete by (1:30 pm)
Report to National Response Center (2:30 pm)
Tribe Notified
EPA Issues First Press Release (11:26)
EPA Begins Sampling (know first round collected at 6pm, we think they started earlier but cannot confirm right now)
Plume Reaches Silverton (11:30am)

8/6/15

EPA Stand Up REOC (10:00)

HQs, R6 and R9 are Notified (11:00)

Animas is Closed to Recreational Users (coordination with locals and ATSDR to make decision at approximately 10:30; we saw official printed release later in the afternoon).

Durango Treatment Plant is Secure per Reports from Water Program (3:45)

Plume Reaches Durango (late afternoon)

EPA Deploys Additional OSC, ASPECT, Personnel (varied, beginning at 12:30)

EPA Issued PolRep (approx. 3:30)

8/7/15

ASPECT Flyover (initiated at 0730, found extent of plume at 830-lat/longs received, map pending)

Sampling and Monitoring Data is Available (pending-expecting initial sample results around noon).

Next Steps:

Construct 2 ponds at mine site and start treatment by this afternoon or tomorrow morning

Continue to sample water and monitor plume

Continue to collect and present data

Coordinate with R6, R9, state of CO and local entities

Provide status updates with HQ, media and public

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